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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/725,863

12/02/2003

John H. Whiton

C-2951

2790

7590

10/05/2005

M. P. Williams
210 Main Street
Manchester, CT 06040

EXAMINER

RUTHKOSKY, MARK

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1745

DATE MAILED: 10/05/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/725,863

Applicant(s)

WHITON ET AL.

Examiner

Mark Ruthkosky

Art Unit

1745

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 4/14/2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 4/2004.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statement filed 4/14/2004 has been placed in the application file, and the information referred to therein has been considered as to the merits.

Drawings

The drawings filed on 12/2/2003 have been approved.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

Claims 1, 6, 7, and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kugler et al. (US 5,622,606.)

The instant claims are to a fuel cell inlet fuel apparatus for a fuel cell stack, comprising a fuel supply pipe; a fuel inlet manifold; and an inlet fuel distributor comprising a plurality of fuel conduits of substantially equal length and substantially equal flow cross section, each extending

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from said fuel supply pipe to said fuel inlet manifold, said plurality of fuel conduits selected from (a) channels formed in a thin plate and (b) tubes.

Kugler et al. (US 5,622,606) teaches an inlet gas apparatus comprising a gas supply pipe; a gas inlet manifold, and an inlet gas distributor comprising a plurality of conduits of substantially equal length and substantially equal flow cross section, each extending from said a supply pipe to an inlet manifold, said plurality of conduits are selected from channels formed by tubes (see figures 1-4 and claims 1-4.) The intended use limitations of the apparatus in a fuel cell are not given patentable weight. A recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. As the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, it meets the claim. Thus, the claims are anticipated.

Claims 1-3 and 5-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Pinto (US2003/0118878.)

Pinto (US2003/0118878) teaches an inlet gas apparatus comprising a gas supply pipe; a gas inlet manifold, and an inlet gas distributor comprising a plurality of conduits of substantially equal length and substantially equal flow cross section, each extending from said a supply pipe to an inlet manifold, said plurality of conduits selected from channels formed in a thin plate (see figures 4a and 4b, para. 96-98 and 1-4 and claims 1-32.) The fuel may be a gas. Tubes are formed in the plate as shown in figure 4. The intended use limitations of the apparatus in a fuel cell are not given patentable weight. A recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to

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patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. As the prior art structure is capable of performing the intended use, it meets the claim. Thus, the claims are anticipated.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pinto (US2003/0118878), as applied above, and further in view of Kugler et al. (US 5,622,606).

The teachings of Pinto have been presented. Pinto does not teach channels that have more than one exit. Kugler et al. (US 5,622,606), however, teaches an inlet gas apparatus comprising a gas supply pipe; a gas inlet manifold, and an inlet gas distributor comprising a plurality of conduits of substantially equal length and substantially equal flow cross section. The tubes are branched in order to distribute the gas more homogeneously across a supply section. It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include more than one exit in the channels of Pinto in order to more evenly distribute the gas from the supply system. The artisan would have found the claimed invention to be obvious in light of the teachings of the references.

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Examiner Correspondence

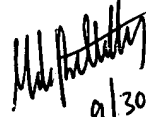
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mark Ruthkosky whose telephone number is 571-272-1291. The examiner can normally be reached on FLEX schedule (generally, Monday-Thursday from 9:00-6:30.) If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached at 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free.)

Mark Ruthkosky

Primary Patent Examiner

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9/30/05